

Persuasion, Politeness and Relational Models

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Abstract: Politeness Theory, just like Grice's Cooperative Principle, points out that pragmatic analysis of language behaviour has to be grounded in extra-linguistic facts of social (or even biological) nature. Additionally, despite the slightly misleading label, Politeness Theory provides a sound methodology to explain some persuasive as well as politeness phenomena. In the same vein, the so called Relational Model Theory provides another theoretical framework for the explanation of persuasive phenomena and persuasive language. Both Relational Model Theory and Politeness Theory show that persuasion is also to be understood as a rational response to not-so-rational social and biological needs. In the article an attempt is made to compare the two theories focusing on their explanatory power in reference to language choices aiming at enhancing the persuasive potential of a language message.

Keywords: pragmatics, communication, face-work, Politeness Theory, Relational Models Theory

1. Introduction

In *Language Misconceived: Arguing for Applied Cognitive Sociolinguistics* (2006) K. Janicki addresses an all-important issue of the relationship between language and communication. In trying to point out how the two notions are interrelated, the author seems to emphasise the idea that language should be primarily studied *as* communication. Without going into the quite complex argument that the author develops, let us dwell for a moment on one of the crucial issues involved in the argument, namely that of linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge.

In developing his argument, Janicki draws extensively upon ideas and distinctions introduced by Harris (1991, 1998). One of such distinctions is that between segregationism and integrationism. He writes that:

The former maintains that separating language from nonlanguage (and, we can add, by extension, linguistics from nonlinguistics) is possible and important; the latter maintains that such separation is neither possible nor important (2006, p. 44).

And further on, Janicki seems to subscribe to Harris's view that language cannot be, or is actually never, analysed without some prior assumptions about communication that inform the analysis. The claim presented by Harris is in fact even stronger, because he explicitly writes that segregation of language from wider communicative phenomena is impossible:

The integrationist holds ... that a theory of language(s) without a theory of communication is vacuous. ... There is no autonomy for linguistics, because we cannot in practice segregate linguistic knowledge from extra-linguistic knowledge. The two domains are integrated, not segregated. The study of that integration and its complexity is the proper study of language: there is no other.

The integrationist therefore rejects the idea that verbal communication involves the kind of activity which allows the linguistic components to be distinguished from the non-linguistic and analysed systematically without reference to the latter. The integrationist claim, on the contrary, is that any such segregation is impossible. Not just difficult or dubious in certain cases, but impossible in principle. It is the recognition of that impossibility which is the cornerstone of integrational linguistics. (Harris, 1998, p. 10)

In other words, there is no, unless artificially introduced, distinction between linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge. If we ask questions concerning *what* and *how* people do when they communicate something, we cannot look for answers exclusively within the domain of language as an autonomous, abstract, and idealized system. Rather, we have to address wide communication phenomena that exist and develop within the social reality as we know it. A communicator simply has to interpret "communicative context" as a systematic on-line construction of mental models of the interlocutor's belief and intention states' (Givon 2005: xiv).

This is a claim about the ubiquitous pragmatic dimension of any language in use, a claim that probably most, if not all, linguists would subscribe to. But to know that language in use is contextually motivated is one thing, the other is to unravel the context. The real crux of the matter is to capture all relevant contextual factors that inform linguistic choices of a speaker driven in his choices by a particular communicative aim.

What follows is deeply indebted to, and influenced by, this way of thinking about language and communication. My point is to focus on some aspects of the extra-linguistic that seem to critically influence linguistic choices in social persuasion. Or – should I say, to be true to the integrationist view – the point is to highlight those aspects of social reality that permeate any act of social persuasion, since in any act of social persuasion we implicitly rely on socially developed cognitive models that account for our understanding of how decisions are taken within society. To be more precise, my point is to show how in social persuasion

we implicitly rely on the so called relational models postulated by Fiske and Haslam (Fiske, 2004).

My point is also to show some limitations of public discussion that sometimes seem to be neglected. Public discussion of public issues is the mainstay of democracy because purportedly it is, or can be, a manifestation of human rationality. The optimistic view of rationality, embraced for example by Habermas in his *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984), and his conviction that “ideal speech situation” is possible has been undermined substantially since the publication of the *Theory*. Especially the research in cognitive psychology by Kahneman and Tversky, summarised best in *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (2011) shows that empirical research challenges the assumption of human rationality. The unknowing reliance on implicit social decision-making models seems to be another limitation to what seemingly is rational argumentation.

In doing so, I start with some general remarks about persuasion in general and social persuasion in particular. Then, before I try to show how relational models, as idealised models of social reality shared universally by people, may be used as an analytical tool to account for language choices within social persuasion, I briefly refer to some aspects of Politeness Theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This short reference to Brown and Levinson’s theory is meant to highlight the aspects of a pragmatic theory *per se* that are missing in other paradigms of the analysis of persuasive messages. It is my deep conviction that postulating relational models as universally shared models of decision-making processes may be seen as a small contribution to understanding “context as other minds” (Givon, 2005) which comes into play in social persuasion.

2. Persuasion

Just as any kind of communication, persuasive communication has its linguistic as well as extralinguistic dimensions. On the one hand, there is the language content that is supposed to bring about a persuasive effect, on the other, there are cognitive structures activated by the language content that actually are the real locus where the persuasive effect is brought about. But there is no segregation between the two. Both language and mental structures involved in the process are two aspects of one indivisible process of communication in which language evokes relevant structures and modifies them, and the mental structures, in turn, impose language choices and inform the interpretation processes. Those structures are not *the consequence* of the language used; rather they are a prior condition that makes using language in a particular way possible. There is no cause-and-result relationship or temporal sequence here. The structures and language are truly integrated into one.

Seen in this way, persuasion is not so much a matter of language as it is a matter of appropriate cognitive mechanisms being activated by concrete language choices. Language is important because under normal circumstances it is very often the essential (sometimes the only) means by which those structures are evoked, created, recreated and modified. But still, from this perspective, language is of a secondary importance. Since in order to persuade a persuader has to induce in the persuadee desirable (from the perspective of the persuader) cognitive structures, it is those structures that are of the primary importance. In other words, if I start with the assumption that a particular way of thinking or a particular perspective is desirable to make you change your mind, there are definitely at least a couple of different language strategies that I can use in order to induce this way of thinking or perspective, and definitely there are a number of syntagmatic linguistic choices that may serve the same purpose.

This is not to undermine in any way the role of language in persuasive communication. Notwithstanding the fact that the real nature of persuasion is psychological (neurological), language is the tool, sometimes the only tool, that is used to exert an impact on relevant mental processes. And yet, there are no language mechanisms that might be said to be intrinsically persuasive, and no matter how crucial the role of language is as a means to an end, the role should be seen as that of a catalyst to activate relevant mental processes.

There is no obvious dichotomy in this approach. From the very beginning of rhetoric studies the effectiveness of language use for rhetorical purposes has always been understood as a matter of language's emotional impact (or any other impact) as much as it has been a matter of its propositional content. In other words, to bring about a rhetorical effect it is crucially important to focus both on *what* one says and *how* one says it. For rhetorical purposes the means one employs and the meaning one conveys are one indivisible whole, and it is only for analytical purposes that we try to separate whatever cognitive structures are activated by particular language means from those very means.

Also, from the very beginning ancient rhetoric recognized the inseparable links between cognition, language, and action (as a result of appropriate persuasion):

Already by the 5th century B.C., there had emerged an intuitive notion of truth that could be termed the rhetorical ideal. According to this ideal, thinking, speaking, and acting form an inseparable complex: it is possible for a human being to develop and formulate his or her thoughts and ideas properly (the sphere of logic), to express them properly (rhetorics), and, in accordance with these, to act properly (justice) (Lotman, 2009, pp. 868-869).

Indeed, the link between thought, language and action cannot be overestimated if the persuasive use of language is to be given its due. We are

perhaps more aware of the fact that thinking, speaking, and action are an inseparable complex in the context of persuasive communication since here a particular way of speaking is supposed to bring about a particular way of thinking, and this, in turn, is supposed to lead to a particular form of action. But we should also be aware that a particular way of speaking may be motivated by an (assumed) particular way of thinking that characterises the addressee, either because we simply know that or because it is universal.

One important aspect of understanding persuasive language is to realize that both the content and the means count, and they are not only intertwined but integrated into a whole. The other thing is to realize that the way in which the content and the form are intertwined is complex and manifold. The complexity that has been mentioned is naturally the focus of rhetoric and any kind of language study in which the analysis focuses on how a particular linguistic choice influences (or at least may potentially influence) the recipient. To simplify obvious difficulties, let us assume here that the persuasive potential of language use lies, on the one hand, in releasing effectively the potential that is inherent in language itself, on the other hand, this potential is realised by effectively combining or juxtaposing the ideas that are evoked by language.

Such a division is parallel to the classic form/meaning distinction in linguistics, or figures of speech/figures of thought distinction in rhetoric. If we look at persuasive potential through the form/meaning distinction, we emphasise the inseparateness of *what* and *how*, and the necessity of looking at language as a formal and conceptual whole in which both aspects collaborate to produce the total communicative effect. If we look at persuasive potential through the rhetorical distinction, we emphasise the potential that is exclusive to language and that which derives from what is beyond language.

Another way of presenting the same distinction may be through a resort to the concept of perspective and perspectivity. In the introductory paper to *Perspective and Perspectivation in Language*, Graumann and Kallmayer (2002, p. 2) present two major conceptions of perspectivity:

- an epistemological conception as a general characteristic of human consciousness and knowledge as it has been initiated mainly (but differently) by Leibniz, Nietzsche, Husserl.
- a social-interactional conception of perspective-setting and -taking as it was initiated by George Herbert Mead (1934) and Alfred Schutz (1962).

On the one hand, perspectivity is viewed as a general characteristic of human cognition. The totality of the external world, general experience, as well as individual external stimuli are not autonomous to the human mind, but are integrated within cognitive structures of an individual who is at the same time

aware of the fact that these are his or her cognitions. The fact that “I” can experience my self as both the source and the aim of my experiencing the world allows me to accept and understand other perspectives as originating in selves other than me. On the other hand, even the basic forms of social interaction presuppose communicating perspectives. First of all, communicating anything means communicating at the same time the perspective of the source of the communication; and the awareness that there is no total overlap of perspectives that the interactants may have is not only a priori assumption but also the ultimate motivator for communication to take place at all. Secondly, it is only through mutual perspective-setting that any form of social cooperation is possible.

In analysing persuasive messages, perspectivity means, then, two distinct phenomena. It is the necessary perspective involved in language choices – the perspective generated by paradigmatic choices within any syntagmatic structure, and the perspective which results from explicit or implicit reliance on mutually recognized / followed patterns that are culturally (or otherwise) induced. Language use creates, then, two types of perspectives: (1) internal perspective induced by paradigmatic and syntagmatic choices and (2) external perspective, prior to any linguistic choices, which is evoked by various language references to assumed mental models.

My final remark concerning persuasion is that it is a protean concept, whose understanding changes together with changing social contexts, aims of persuasive attempts and means that are used. Social decision-making has been extensively researched within the framework of experimental social psychology. The research within this paradigm focuses on such issues as mutual trust, reciprocity, cooperation etc., factors that have an impact on the decisions people take. In other words, “social” from this perspective refers to how other people and how we perceive what may influence decisions we take.

But there is another dimension of social decision-making; there are decisions that are taken individually, but the content or the subject matter of those decisions is social in nature – it concerns not only the individual that decides but also, or primarily, the group the individual is related to. And this is the type of persuasion I try to analyse in the further part of this paper. According to the so called Relational Model Theory (Haslam, 2004), there are four basic patterns that people follow when they take social decisions in this sense. I try to argue that the Relational Model Theory constitutes a cognitive basis for persuasive choices and is the ultimate reference base we resort to when we use language persuasively in social context. From the integrationist perspective, the model captures the ultimate reference framework that informs our persuasive choices in social persuasion.

3. Politeness Model as a Paradigm Persuasive Model

A natural corollary to the integrationist position adopted at the beginning is the assumption that persuasion is essentially about a particular perspective induced in written or spoken (visual, behavioural) messages that can be fully understood and analysed essentially from a pragmatic point of view. And a pragmatic point of view means here the broadest possible pragma-cognitive approach that combines both the primarily mental nature of language embedded in human-specific cognition and social-interactionist nature of language. This is how Langacker comments on this wide pragma-cognitive approach:

A cognitive approach to language can also be a pragmatic approach, for cognition figures crucially in linguistic behavior, social interaction, and contextual understanding. Despite its emphasis on conceptualization (broadly understood as encompassing all mental experience), cognitive grammar explicitly denies the existence of any sharp or specific boundary between pragmatic and linguistic considerations. It is in fact a pragmatically grounded theory of language in regard to its organization, its view of semantics, and even its account of grammar. (Langacker, 2009, p.77)

Such a broad perspective allows us to integrate into the concept of context all types of cognitive models that we rely on while communicating. But making a resort to the concept of context does not actually solve any problems; rather, it opens up a whole agenda of issues to be dealt with that have to be addressed to account for facts of social interaction. In the introduction to his versatile account of context, Givon (2005) summarizes the problem in the following way:

Almost from the moment my *Mind, Code and Context* (1989) came out, indeed even before, I knew — to my sorrow — that the book fell woefully short of my own expectations. Something was missing, something vital and pivotal, whose absence made it impossible to generalize from the pragmatics of individual cognition to the pragmatics of sociality and communication. The bridging principle was not there, the one that would connect first-order framing of ‘external’ reality, second-order framing of one’s own mind, and third-order framing of other minds. That bridge, I believe, can be found in the work of the last two and a half decades — beginning with Premack and Woodruff (1978) — on so-called “Theories of Mind”. With the bridge in place, the pragmatics of sociality and communication can now be re-formulated in terms of one’s mental models of the mind of one’s interlocutor or collaborator, a reformulation that is surely implicit in Grice’s “maxims” (1968). What I have attempted to do here is re-position pragmatics, and most conspicuously the pragmatics of culture, sociality, and communication, in a neuro-cognitive, bio-adaptive, evolutionary context. This is indeed a tall order, and the book is thus, inevitably, only an opening sketch (xiii-xiv)

Just like Grice's co-operative principle is a step forward on the way to giving a full account of "pragmatics of sociality and communication", Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory is another step forward on the same road. The theory is fairly well known, so there is no point in discussing its basic assumptions, but there are a couple of issues that are worth mentioning. First and foremost, the theory is known as politeness theory, but, as Gumperz notices in the introduction to *Politeness*, it touches actually upon the "foundations of human social life":

A major reason for [interest in politeness], as the authors define it, is basic to the production of social order, and a precondition of human cooperation, so that any theory which provides an understanding of this phenomenon at the same time goes to the foundations of human social life (Gumperz, 1987, p. xiii)

We may call the phenomena the authors describe politeness phenomena, but essentially, they write about two types of perspectives that are deeply anchored in social, or even biological, needs. Satisfying those needs, taking care of "positive" or "negative" face, is – to put it simply – imposing a perspective which either caters to the addressee's need to feel an autonomous individual, or a member of some social group. Incidentally, substantial part of all examples analyzed in *Politeness* are examples of clearly persuasive language in which all the "facework" is ultimately intended to bring about a persuasive effect.

Politeness phenomena in Brown and Levinson's account are actually manifestations of universal assumptions that have been recognized as indispensable in creating social comity. On this account, they are not just a possible addition to an exchange, disposable if need be, but an inherent dimension of communication that has evolved together with other aspects of communication. Since there is no faceless communication (Scollon & Scollon, 2001), being polite is not a matter of choice, even if we chose *what* to say and *how* to say something to address face needs. *Choice* itself is a problematic concept in this context, since a typical speaker, not biased by analytical reflection, is not necessarily aware of choosing anything. This lack of awareness naturally accompanies most choices that are 'taken' as a manifestation of any contextually relevant model of reality.

The reason why I make this short digression to Politeness Theory is twofold. Firstly, the theory redefines the very notion of politeness, making it a less elusive and more analysable concept. Such a notion departs from what is conventionally understood by "being polite". But there is more to that than just redefining and making the concept more precise. Politeness is not a cultural concept any more, susceptible to cultural interpretation and hence varying from culture to culture. Rather, it is an offshoot of strictly biological needs that have to be satisfied by linguistic choices. And that means that politeness conceptualised in this way becomes a universal concept. Naturally, how positive and negative face needs are

addressed has its cultural dimension, too, but the underlying mechanism is universal anyway.

Secondly, such a universal concept of politeness, couched in terms of positive and negative face needs, provides a universal tool to analyse verbal (and non-verbal for that matter) exchanges. Politeness needs are universal and so are the strategies to address them. Once again, there is for sure a cultural touch to such choices, but the fact remains that assuming the extra-linguistic basis of face needs makes the theory a universal perspective and an analytical tool on a general level, even if concrete strategies may be culture-specific.

Persuasiveness of language, whether it is approached within linguistic, rhetorical, or psychological paradigms, seems to be even a fuzzier concept than politeness. There is no uniform notion of persuasion based on extralinguistic universals and, what follows, no universal tool to analyse persuasive exchanges. In their monograph, Gass and Seiter (2004) provide 22 definitions of the term, but they openly state that:

[they] wish to acknowledge from the outset that [they] maintain no illusions about there being a “correct” definition of persuasion. Various scholars and researchers conceptualize persuasion differently and therefore subscribe to varying definitions of the term. And although there are some commonalities among some definitions, there are as many differences as there are similarities (Gass & Seiter, 2004, p. 17)

The multitude of definitions reflect five basic issues about which there is no universal agreement among researchers. The issues are the following: (1) whether persuasion is intentional or not, (2) whether persuasion means only a successful activity, (3) whether persuasion refers only to conscious efforts, (4) whether persuasion is effected only via symbolic action, and (5) whether self-persuasion may also be legitimately call persuasion (Seiter & Gass, 2004).

The analysis of the phenomenon as it is understood by various scholars leads to the conclusion that persuasion is a prototypical category, prototypical in the sense used in cognitive sciences. In other words, there are no clear sufficient and necessary conditions/properties that must obtain for a phenomenon to be called persuasion (which would be typical of classical categorization). Rather, individual instances of persuasion, particular persuasive attempts, share only some properties, and what really makes all of them similar / ties them all together within one conceptual category is ‘family resemblance’ (Wittgenstein, 1953).

This conclusion obviously reflects psychological reality and our common experience concerning the phenomenon of persuasion. The abundance of contexts, mediums, channels, and behaviours that are involved in persuasive efforts make it impossible to provide a satisfactory and exhaustive description that could cover all instances counting as persuasion.

So the question that naturally comes to mind is: is it possible to think about persuasiveness the way Brown and Levinson think about politeness? Is it possible to redefine, or at least reframe, the concept so that persuasion be based on some universal assumptions concerning the nature of humans or human interactions? It seems that at least to some extent it is possible.

4. Relational Models

Gumperz's remark quoted above is of primary importance here. Politeness theory addresses issues that are "basic to the production of social order, and a precondition of human cooperation". This insight clearly ties up with the strong integrationist claim. One may pursue one's aims and in trying to be polite is, if anything, only weakly aware that the linguistic choices are reflections of universally recognized needs, but the language one chooses does reflect the underlying model. Persuasion, even more so than politeness, is definitely about "production of social order" and "human cooperation". How, then, can we address the persuasive phenomena through a reference to one or a set of basic assumptions about what persuasion essentially is?

Such a possibility stems from the fact that social persuasion (understood the way it has been defined above), unlike persuasion involving individuals who are to decide on issues relating exclusively to them, is based on a universal cognitive model of social decision-making processes. The theory itself was first advanced in the early 90s. In an article from 1992, Fiske expresses – what may feel as a surprise – that up till then no uniform paradigm accounting for "social relations" had been postulated:

Researchers and theorists in diverse social science fields have repeatedly – an independently – discovered one or more of these four fundamental forms of social relations. But even the few scientists who have discovered all four basic modes of interaction in one particular domain of social life have been unaware of the parallel discoveries of researchers in other fields. Hence they have explained the social forms they have observed as consequences of the features of the specific social domain. The present relational models theory posits that the socially significant features in most social situations can usually be described in terms of just four fundamental structures. Whatever the context and content, whatever the substance and surface form of the interaction, people's primary frames of reference in social life are the same four elementary relational models (Fiske, 1992, p. 690)

The theory postulates four basic operational modes of interacting that are assumed when humans try to regulate social interaction. This is how Fiske comments on the model:

Relational models theory is simple. People relate to each other in just four ways, structured with respect to (1) what they have in common, (2) ordered differences, (3) additive imbalances, or (4) ratios. When people focus on what they have in common, they are using a model we call Communal Sharing. When people construct some aspect of an interaction in terms of ordered differences, the model is Authority Ranking. When people attend to additive imbalances, they are framing the interaction in terms of the Equality Matching model. When they coordinate certain of their actions according to proportions or rates, the model is Market Pricing. Everyone uses this repertoire of relational capacities to plan and to generate their own action, to understand, remember, and anticipate others, to coordinate the joint production of collective action and institutions, and to evaluate their own and other's action. In different cultures, people use these four relational models in different ways, in different contexts, and in differing degrees. In short, four innate, open-ended relational structures, completed by congruent socially transmitted complements, structure most social action, thought, and motivation (Fiske, 2004, p. 3).

To put it simply, the argument goes that what regulates our decision-making processes are four templates that are implicitly assumed as a kind of background, or a yardstick, against which actions or decisions are measured. If what the model postulates is true, our actions are measured not in any objectively absolute sense, but always from within a system of assumptions that are natural (obvious, axiomatic) within a particular area of social interaction. The research shows that the elementary models play an important role in cognition including perception of other persons (Haslam, 2004).

The implication for persuasive discourse is that social decisions which are arrived at through social persuasion, exactly because they are social, have to be based on relational models. If this is so, communicatively speaking only three situations are possible: (1) either both parties, implicitly or explicitly, assume and recognize the same model, in which case no model negotiation is involved and an issue is persuaded "on its merits", or else (2) both parties recognize different models, in which case some form of model negotiation must take place. Alternatively, it seems also possible (3) that participants do not recognize the difference, and without establishing a mutual meta-level perspective, they try to convince one another, talking actually at cross-purposes, because without a common frame of reference they do not realize they understand and perceive differently what they talk about.

5. Analysis

A good example of social persuasion is an internet chat involving local residents and a representative of local authorities. This is a communicative context in which exchanges are limited to 2-3 turns, and sometimes it is just a question or a statement followed by a response. What follows is only a part of a record of such a chat chosen practically at random, available at the web page: <http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/about-us/have-your-say/chat-with-the-mayor/>. It is a chat between the Mayor of Moreland City (part of Greater Melbourne) and local residents. Although the invitation says that “[c]hat with the Mayor is great opportunity for you to actively engage with your Mayor, find out more about Council services and share your ideas about how we can all make Moreland an even better place to live”, actually quite a lot of the exchanges are persuasive exchanges.

The aim of the analysis is very simple. I do not want to focus on analysing the nature and mechanisms of persuasive speech acts; instead I try to point out how relevant relational models are negotiated. The assumption is a simple one: if an exchange is persuasive in nature and has a very limited scope, participants have to negotiate on the meta-level a relevant model of decision-making. So instead of pointing out how persuasion *per se* is effected, I focus on how both sides try to establish this meta-level of communication. Naturally, I omit in the analysis everything that is not persuasive, so for example the opening utterance of the Mayor, which is a combination of greetings, promises and technical explanation, is not included. For the sake of clarity one colour is supposed to mark out one relevant thread in the chat in which the same people are involved and which pursue the same persuasive issue. The only intervention in the original text on my part are references to and labels of the relational models [IN CAPITAL LETTERS IN SQUARE BRACKETS].

Here is the record:

08-02-2015 11:02:20

Mayor

Hi everyone! Welcome to Chat with your Mayor for another month. This is your Mayor, Meghan Hopper, ready to answer your questions and listed to your ideas about the Moreland community. I will do my best to answer as many questions as possible, however if I am unable to get to everybody, you are more than welcome to email your question to mhopper@moreland.vic.gov.au and we will respond as soon as possible :)

08-02-2015 11:02:48

Dallas

Hi Mayor Hopper. From my knowledge Moreland doesn't have any fenced dog parks. We have parks where dogs are allow off leash but I think that residents would appreciate and support a fenced park somewhere in our suburb [COMMUNAL SHARING]. Is this being talked about?

08-02-2015 11:03:41

Philip

Hello Meghan I would like to talk about the development along Lygon St, specifically how this impacts on the neighborhood at street level, as many of these shockingly ugly buildings ground floor retail spaces are empty, some several years after completion. Personally I cannot see how this creates healthy, active, safe streets [COMMUNAL SHARING or MARKET PRICING] Thank you.

08-02-2015 11:04:00

Mayor

Hi Dallas, I LOVE fenced dog parks. I've seen some great ones in action in New South Wales. I'm very interested in talking about fenced off-leash areas in parks but last time we consulted the community, they weren't so keen. Some dog owners thought it wasn't a great step [COMMUNAL SHARING IS NOT THE MODEL]] It's great to hear your positive feedback for fenced dog off-leash areas and we'll certainly keep talking about them into the future. We were looking at funding a dog agility park somewhere in Moreland but unfortunately it didn't make it into the 2015-16 Budget [MARKET PRICING];(hopefully we will find room for it next time around!

08-02-2015 11:04:42

Dk

Why do we have to pay 5 percent rate rise when Moreland is paying higher wages to its workers than adjoining councils? [MARKET PRICING] Will Mayor look into this?

08-02-2015 11:06:03

Dallas

Ok well I'd really like to see that happen in Moreland. I'd be interested to know how council found out the community wasn't keen? [I DO THINK COMMUNITY SHARING IS THE MODEL] I live in Brunswick West and think it would be well utilised.

08-02-2015 11:06:25

Mayor

Hi Phillip, thanks for your question. I live just off Lygon Street on Glenlyon Road so I certainly sympathise with your concerns. Ultimately we want to be encouraging buildings to activate their ground floor with hospitality or retail spaces but I agree that the outcome isn't achieved when those spaces aren't filled. [OBJECTIVELY SPEAKING IT IS COMMUNAL SHARING or MARKET PRICING] I know that our Economic Development team works hard with building owners to help them grow local business and I'll certainly pass your feedback on. [BUT FROM MY PERSPECTIVE IT IS AUTHORITY RANKING] Hi DK, didn't you ask that question last time? ;) #dejavu

08-02-2015 11:07:59

Dk

It was not me ..

08-02-2015 11:08:04

Mayor

Hi Dallas, it was before my time on Council that we last surveyed the community on off-leash dog parks and their implementation across Moreland. When I brought up the topic of fenced off-leash parks upon arriving on Council I was told "don't go there!" [AUTHORITY RANKING ???]. I would be very interested to see us go back out to the community with this question again [EQUALITY MATCHING] - perhaps we can do so next time our Open Spaces or Pets strategies come up for consultation.

08-02-2015 11:08:13

Matt

Hi Meghan, Michael Teti has now been kicked out of the Labor Party, how come he's still a Councillor? [COMMUNAL SHARING]

08-02-2015 11:08:32

Dk

You have not answered my question

08-02-2015 11:08:38

Philip

Thank you Meghan. Perhaps there is also a need for developers to make a commitment to other aspects of the street level built environment, such as greater setbacks or green spaces. As you would know, it's all concrete and glass around here. [MARKET PRICING (COMMUNAL SHARING?)]

08-02-2015 11:09:02

Mayor

Hi DK, I'll come to your question in a moment, just working through them person by person and I honestly did think you were here last time :)

08-02-2015 11:10:13

Peter Robertson

When will residents of NE ward be given an opportunity to elect a new councillor now Teti is out of ALP? Surely he must be thrown out of Council or will you continue to protect him? [COMMUNAL SHARING]

08-02-2015 11:10:38

Dk

There is a r

08-02-2015 11:11:13

Dallas

Ok well I'm with you and think it's worth raising and going out to public again in order to get it off the ground. [EQUALITY MATCHING] Thanks for listening to me, greatly appreciated.

08-02-2015 11:11:55

Mayor

Hi DK, Moreland has excellent staff and as Mayor I'm thrilled to see us supporting them as an organisation. The 5% rate increase covers all sorts of things - 60% of our base budget is staff costs, but then we also have major projects to deliver such as the Oak Park Baths upgrade, the Wilson Avenue Park and the Bush Reserve Park that we just delivered, and then all our day-to-day services like libraries, meals on wheels, sports and aquatic centres, etc. From 2016-17 the State Government will be introducing Rate Capping which means that residents will have lower rates increases, but it will also mean that we have to consider the services we deliver as a Council. [MARKET PRICING]

Hi Matt and Peter, thanks for your question. I'll refer you to the Local Government Act: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/lga1989182/. Council is not empowered to remove a Councillor unless they have been absent for four consecutive meetings or have been found guilty of a crime carrying a maximum penalty of five years or more. Neither of these things is true in Cr Teti's case and so we are required to respect the decision made by the 2,249 people who chose to elect him in 2012. You will have an opportunity to elect your next round of Councillors in October, 2016. [AUTHORITY RANKING]

08-02-2015 11:14:30

Dk

I raised this question before..Council should reveal how much money has been spent by senior executives on morning teas. There is a rumour that current CEO is like Bronwyn Bishop..would council reveal her expenses.?

08-02-2015 11:15:14

Mayor

DK, I don't know where that rumour has come from but literally that could not be further from the truth! The current CEO is very frugal and I would describe us both as economic pragmatists

08-02-2015 11:15:28

Peter Robertson

Thats a cop out, NE residents have a representative who does not turn up, never answers emails, pursues his own career, works with Mafia linked people and still enjoys your support. The 2249 people who elected Teti voted for an ALP councillor. You must come out publically against him now please. [MARKET PRICING]

08-02-2015 11:16:46

Agnes

It says on your website that the Advisory Committee hearing commenced on 21 July for 122-124 Nicholson Street, Brunswick East – what is the outcome considering that RRR were concerned about the proposed height and location interfering with their signal?

08-02-2015 11:16:49

Mayor

Hi Philip, there is plenty more than can be done to improve the standard of apartment development in Brunswick and more broadly [MARKET PRICING]. Council has recently submitted C134 - the Brunswick Structure Plan for the Minister's approval and that will have a lot of say on how the Lygon, Sydney and Nicholson corridors are developed into the future [AUTHORITY RANKING] We have also developed an Apartment Design Code which has been praised by the Minister as a leader in the Local Government field, and indeed he is now developing a similar program at a State level.

08-02-2015 11:18:11

Dk

We will be releasing current CEO's poor management of rate payer's money during next council election

08-02-2015 11:18:14

Supercoach

Good afternoon your worship, can we expect oval lighting @J.P. Fawkner reserve in Oak Park

08-02-2015 11:18:14

Mayor

Hi Peter, I feel like I've addressed your question a few times in the past. My role and the role of all Councillors is governed by the Local Government Act. It's not a cop out, it's the law. I have no power beyond the law. We don't always like what happens at the ballot box - I'm not thrilled with the PM, personally - but that's how democracy works sometimes. [AUTHORITY RANKING]

08-02-2015 11:18:46

Abraham

Hi Mayor, with the increased population in the city of Moreland what are we doing/planning to do to address the needs of the locals for services like preschool (Kindergartens) and High Schools?

08-02-2015 11:19:37

Supercoach

sorry that was meant to read oval lighting upgrade

08-02-2015 11:20:27

Mayor

Hi Agnes, no outcome on RRR as yet :(we are all watching that one very eagerly but as the Minister has called it in I would expect it may take some time while he considers all the facts of the case. I'm a big supporter of RRR and used to host Room with a View there back in my student radio days, so it really disappoints me that a developer is continuing to push for a height that would obstruct their fresnel zone and is beyond that recommended by our Structure Plan. Developers need to keep in mind what is best for the community sometimes, not just their bottom dollar.

Hi DK, I'll be interested to see what you release as up until one month ago, our new CEO and Council were delivering a budget prepared under a different CEO - as you may be aware, she commenced in the role in January. I think she's doing a fine job of managing a very large city's budget.

08-02-2015 11:22:03

Agnes

Thanks. By the way, loving the new LED lighting along the Upfield path in Brunswick!

08-02-2015 11:22:16

Natalie

I went to the Wilson Ave party yesterday and it was really great, but how does Council plan to utilise the space in the future? It would be a great place to hold markets... even an outdoor cinema! What are your plans?

08-02-2015 11:23:40

Peter Robertson

Lay down with dogs and you will get fleas. Teti did provide the casting vote for you to become Mayor, lest we forget.

Dallas (yellow):

Dallas's aim is to convince the mayor that a fenced park is a good idea. So having greeted the mayor and started with some introductory remarks, he resorts to the communal sharing model. It seems that the whole contribution may be treated as a persuasive macro speech act in which the beginning, an assertive speech act pointing out what kind of dog parks there are or there are not in the community, simply frames the meta-communication where the model is negotiated. In this case the model is not self-evident, so Dallas's choice is to try to impose it by stating openly that the need is communally shared (*residents appreciate and support ...*). Using hedging (*I think*) and a tentative form (*would*), Dallas as if opens the negotiation without forcefully imposing the model. On the other hand, this tentative attempt is followed by a straightforward question (*Is this being talked about?*), which strengthens his perspective – the relational model is so obvious (everybody wants a fenced park) that the authorities should be already taking some measures to do what *vox populi* demands.

Mayor's response boils down essentially to first rejecting the model and then imposing the right one (market pricing). The best strategy to question the communal sharing model is simply to point out that there are at least some people who think otherwise, and this is exactly what Mayor does (*last time we consulted the community, they weren't so keen. Some dog owners thought it wasn't a great step*). But Mayor's response is not just a rejection of the communal sharing model; the meta-communication here is quite sophisticated. From the very beginning Mayor aims at undermining Dallas's (wrong) assumption that the communal sharing model is the model that applies to the decision. But she is also aware that

postulating communal sharing model (wrongly or rightly) means that whoever postulates it, they must be convinced that just like them there are other people who share the opinion. Mayor starts very aptly with capitalized “*I LOVE fenced dog parks*”, which is to be interpreted “I, just like you, am for the idea, but it is just you and me, not everybody; we are not talking about a communally shared idea”. This is immediately followed by “*but*” and the rejection of the communal sharing model. Then, before Mayor introduces the market price model (*funding, Budget*), applying it actually not to “*a fenced off-leash park*” but to “*a dog agility park*”, she once again makes a reference to mutually shared (by Mayor and Dallas) positive attitude about the issue (*It’s great to hear your positive feedback for fenced dog off-leash areas*) and even emphasises the fact that this attitude is shared by other people (*we’ll certainly keep talking about them*).

Dallas does not give up on the model he postulates. What he writes next (*I’d be interested to know how council found out the community wasn’t keen?*) must be interpreted as an attempt to defend his model – If you say that the communal sharing model does not apply, prove it; tell me how you found out that this idea is not supported by everybody. And that seems to be a well-chosen strategy because the last contribution of Mayor on this subject is inconclusive, and my impression is that finally it is Dallas who “wins.” First of all, Mayor does not conclusively answer the question (*it was before my time*), so she is not able to conclusively reject the communal sharing model. Then, she seems to make a reference to the authority ranking model (*When I brought up the topic of off-leash parks upon arriving on Council I was told “don’t go there!”*). This reference is, however, a very weak one as an attempt to establish a relevant model – first of all it is not clear by whom she was told not to do that, and she does not try to substantiate the model. Finally, she proposes the equality matching model (*I would be very interested to see us go back out to the community with this question*). This model is accepted by Dallas in his last contribution, not necessarily perhaps because he has been convinced that this model applies, but because if he still believes that everybody approves of the idea, resorting to voting will result in the outcome that he expects.

Philip (green):

This exchange is slightly problematic because it is not a clear case of what is referred to here as social persuasion. Philip and Mayor talk about the private property and the impact on the neighbourhood. So the exchange combines social persuasion with what falls beyond the province of social decision-making. Being aware of the fact, Philip makes an attempt to convince Mayor that something should be done with ugly buildings and empty retail spaces by resorting to communally shared values (*healthy, active, safe streets*). In that sense it may be treated as an attempt to establish the communal sharing model (common values) or

the market pricing model (in practice those values manifest themselves in how those properties are managed and this is a matter of a cost-benefit calculation).

In her response, Mayor addresses both the models. At the beginning, just as in the previous thread, Mayor once again starts with what might look like a confirmation of the communal sharing model (*I certainly sympathise with your concern*), but actually Mayor says it is you and me, not necessarily others, because just like you I have my personal reasons to think the way you/we do (*I live just off Lygon Street*). Then Mayor confirms that, objectively speaking, it is a matter of the market pricing model (*the outcome isn't achieved when those spaces aren't filled*), but at the same time she points out that they are not discussing an issue that is a social persuasion issue (*we want to be encouraging buildings to activate their ground floor*) and to the extent that it is a social decision it is to be taken care of by a particular department. In other words, she says that in this sense the appropriate model is the authority ranking model – no matter how you or I feel about it, “the social component” of the issue, simply because it involves private decisions interfacing with the public domain, has to be relegated to an appropriate decision-taking body (*our Economic Department*).

Further on, Philip seems to accept this perspective (*Thank you Meghan*) and simply tries to emphasize or extend the scope of the communal sharing model (*there is also a need for developers to make commitment to other aspects of the street level built environment*). In her final contribution, since both parties have already agreed on relevant models, Mayor once again confirms what has been established.

Dk (gray):

This thread is a good example of an exchange in which the model is implicitly assumed by both parties and even if there are quite interesting persuasive strategies within the model, the model itself is not negotiated. Dk questions the 5 percent rate rise (implicitly arguing that it is not justified) by providing a skeleton cost-benefit analysis (reducing wages to the level of that of adjacent councils would set off the lower income from lower rates). Mayor just picks up the thread by fleshing out the cost-benefit analysis with a number of details that justify the increase, and by the same token confirms the model implied by Dk

Later on, Dk becomes more personal, resorts even to an insinuation, but no matter whether what Dk implies is true or not, on the meta-level the whole issue remains to be seen as an issue to be decided within the market price model. Mayor's defence of her colleague, although not really substantiated with concrete facts, is also based on the market pricing model. It actually does not come as a surprise that in this case the model is implicitly and mutually accepted from the very beginning. Mayor and Dk naturally accept certain institutional culturally-sanctioned practices.

Matt / Peter Robertson (red / violet):

Since both Matt and Peter Robertson refer to the same issue their arguments have been combined into one thread. The issue is first raised by Matt, who tries to argue that Michael Teti should not be a councillor any more. His argument is based on the assumption that one needs common approval to be a councillor. Since Teti *“has now been kicked out of the Labor Party”* he no longer has common approval. He clearly makes the communal sharing model the relevant model. He is joined by Peter Robertson, who asks *“when will residents of NE ward be given an opportunity to elect a new councillor now Teti is out of ALP?”* So he uses exactly the same kind of argumentation. In both cases the participants forcefully impose the communal sharing model and in both cases it is an attempt to redefine the issue – electing or removing a councillor is a matter of communal sharing. What is interesting is the fact that they both probably know that the relevant model is not the communal sharing model (strongly entrenched cultural pattern) and yet both try to impose it.

Mayor response is an expected one. In saying *“I’ll refer you ...”* she implicitly communicates that the relevant model is the authority ranking model (in this case the relevant regulations). What follows is an interestingly orchestrated manoeuvre followed by a personal attack. First, Peter Robertson strengthens the communal sharing model (the presupposition of the first statement is that everybody knows that the representative *never ans[w]ers emails, pursues his own career, works with Mafia linked people*, but also implies the possibility of the market price model (the characteristic provided supposedly disqualifies him as a representative). Finally, he appeals to Mayor personally *to come out publically against him*. This final appeal paves the way to what he does later on. After Mayor consistently points out that the relevant model is the authority ranking model no matter what (*that’s how democracy works sometimes*), Peter Robertson openly attacks Mayor. This is done still from within the communal sharing model. Having established the communal sharing model, Peter Robertson now is in a position to reinterpret reality – the community know and want one thing and it is only you (Mayor and Teti) who do not share the view and you have **your** reasons (*Lay down with dogs and you will get fleas*). What is interesting here is the fact that the final open attack comes after Mayor has made a conciliatory move. When she says *I’m not thrilled with the PM*, she as if positions herself in line with everybody else (if the communal sharing model were the relevant model, I, just like you, would be against him, but the model is the authority ranking model (*I have no power beyond the law*)).

6. Conclusions

The integrationist perspective holds it that communication is a total act. To fully account for language *as* communication it is necessary to integrate into linguistic analysis all the elements that are relevant for linguistic choices. And such an account is possible only if there is no distinction between the linguistic and the non-linguistic. In the case of social persuasion, the relevant background for the analysis are relational models that constitute the bottom-level assumptions about how issues are decided in social contexts. And in this sense the models (supposedly belonging to the non-linguistic) are fully integrated into the linguistic – they directly influence what speakers do, starting from lexical choices all the way down to persuasive strategies.

This short analysis is meant to show two basic issues involved. First, the relational models, mental models of social decision-making processes, constitute a necessary background to be taken into consideration if persuasive communication is to be given a full account. Participants intuitively rely on the models, and intuitively negotiate one of them if need be. Second, the examples are illustrative of three possible scenarios for this type of meta-communication. (1) Participants may implicitly assume the same model, which means that there is no model negotiation. Instead, there is an implicit signal of a model on one part, which is sanctioned by the other party. It seems that that happens when the issue is entrenched by relevant cultural institutions. (2) Participants may initially assume different models, and, having recognized the discrepancy, they engage in meta-level negotiation of the model. That probably happens when the relevant cultural institutions are not strongly entrenched or the issue in question is complex. The Philip example shows also that social persuasion may be intertwined with issues that are not decided socially, which means that the models have a limited application and the scope of the application is to be negotiated, too. (3) Finally, participants may recognize different models, which must result in a deadlock as long as they do not conclusively negotiate a relevant model. The Matt/Peter Robertson thread is a case in point.

Given the skeletal nature of this attempt to bring into the overall picture one more perspective relevant for persuasive discourse, it is perhaps premature to put forward any other claims. Nonetheless, there are a couple of interesting issues that call for further research. Two of them seem especially interesting to me. First of all, there is the question of potential “inherent” value of those models. The last example is a case in point. Everybody knows that democracy is based on procedures, and being blind to them (insisting on the communal sharing model and rejecting the authority ranking model does not seem to be a symptom of ignorance but of a consistent persuasive strategy). Does that mean, for example, that the communal sharing model is relatively more persuasive so we intuitively stick to it

while fighting a losing battle? After all, *vox populi* has always been a clincher used by revolutionaries of all stripes. Secondly, an interesting question to ask would be the question concerning the ways of negotiating all or particular models. Do we follow certain patterns in reference to the model irrespective of the issue involved or not? A good illustration of that question are the strategies Mayor uses while arguing the first two issues. In both cases her response to the proposed communal sharing model starts with a kind of partial confirmation of the model. Is it a politeness face-saving strategy or a pattern of rejecting the model? The questions are many and diverse.

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